

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00
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SUBJ: THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: A PREVIEW OF THE
JANUARY 16-20 SESSION

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 17206 (B) EC A-492 OF 12/28/77

1. PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL OVER EC-9 POLITICAL COOPERATION
WILL BE ONE OF THE MAIN ITEMS OF DISCUSSION FOR THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (EP) WHEN IT HOLDS ITS FIRST SESSION
OF THE NEW YEAR, JANUARY 16-20, IN LUXEMBOURG. ALSO ON
THE EP'S AGENDA WILL BE A STATEMENT BY EC COMMISSION
PRESIDENT JENKINS ON ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION (EMU)
AND A PRESENTATION BY THE EC COUNCIL PRESIDENT, DANISH
FOREIGN MINISTER K.B. ANDERSEN, ON THE DANISH PRESIDENCY'S
OBJECTIVES DURING ITS SIX-MONTH TENURE. THE EP IS
UNLIKELY TO TAKE SERIOUS ISSUE WITH THE DANISH FOREIGN
MINISTER'S REMARKS AT THE OUTSET OF HIS COUNTRY'S
PRESIDENCY, ALTHOUGH, BASED ON PAST FORM, PARLIAMENTARIANS
WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE SUGGESTIONS TO OFFER REGARD-
ING THE DIRECTION OF COMMUNITY POLICIES IN CERTAIN
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AREAS.

2. ANDERSEN'S STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENCY'S OBJECTIVES
WILL BE FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSION OF A REPORT OF THE EP'S
POLITICAL COMMITTEE, PREPARED BY BLUMFELD (FRG,
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT), CONCERNING THE COMMUNITY'S
POLITICAL COOPERATION. A DETAILED STUDY OF THE DEVELOP-

MENT OF POLITICAL COOPERATION MECHANISMS, THE REPORT PROPOSES INTER ALIA THE ABOLITION OF THE ARTIFICIAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN "COMMUNITY" AND "POLITICAL CO-OPERATION" MATTERS, THE CREATION OF A PERMANENT POLITICAL COOPERATION OFFICE (SEE PARA 3 BELOW), AND THE SUBMISSION OF AN ANNUAL WRITTEN REPORT TO THE PARLIAMENT IN ADDITION TO THE ORAL ONE NOW SUBMITTED BY THE EC COUNCIL PRESIDENT.

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3. IN REVIEWING EC-9 POLITICAL COOPERATION TO DATE, THE EP REPORT ALLEGES THAT SUCCESSES IN THIS AREA HAVE BEEN FEW WHILE, PARTICULARLY SINCE 1973, SIGNIFICANT FAILURES HAVE BEEN MANY, THE MOST NOTABLE BEING THE LACK OF AN EFFECTIVE, UNITED EC-9 RESPONSE TO THE SITUATION CREATED BY THE OCTOBER 1973 ISRAELI-ARAB WAR AND THE CONSEQUENT OIL SUPPLY CRISIS. MOREOVER, THE REPORT CRITICIZES THE EC-9 FOR FAILING TO COOPERATE EFFECTIVELY IN FOREIGN POLICY ACROSS THE BOARD AND RECOMMENDS THE SCRUBBING OF THE CURRENTLY USED COORDINATION PROCEDURE IN FAVOR OF A MORE EFFICIENT MECHANISM TO PROVIDE FOR MORE CONTINUITY IN THE AREA OF POLITICAL COOPERATION. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS TASK, THE EP POLITICAL COMMITTEE SUGGESTS THE CREATION OF A PERMANENT POLITICAL COOPERATION OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR "THE SUPERVISION OF ACTIVITY IN EACH EXISTING SECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY AND FOREIGN POLICY ACTIVITY IN THE WORLD, AND TO FORECAST POSSIBLE EVENTS AS PRECISELY AS POSSIBLE."

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4. IN ARGUING FOR A MEASURE OF PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL OF THE NINE'S FOREIGN POLICY COORDINATION, THE EP POLITICAL COMMITTEE'S REPORT SUGGESTS THAT THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS SHOULD BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE EP PARTICULARLY IN AREAS INVOLVING EC-9 CONSULTATIONS WITH FRIENDLY COUNTRIES, NOTABLY THE U.S., WITH WHICH QUASI-FORMAL LINKS HAVE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEARS CONCERNING SOME ASPECTS OF FOREIGN POLICY (I.E., US-EC DIALOGUE). MORE BROADLY, THE EP POLITICAL COMMITTEE EXPRESSES THE VIEW THAT THE EP SHOULD HAVE MORE CONTROL OVER THE FORMULATION OF A JOINT EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY IN ORDER TO INFLUENCE BOTH LEGISLATION AND THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS, WHICH IS PRESENTLY NOT THE CASE.

5. COMMENT: THE PROBLEM OF MORE EP CONTROL OVER EC POLITICAL COOPERATION IS NOT NEW. ALTHOUGH THE EP WELCOMED THE NOVEMBER 1977 ORAL REPORT ON POLITICAL CO-OPERATION BY THE THEN EC COUNCIL PRESIDENT, BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET (BRUSSELS 16415), THERE WAS AN UNDERLYING CURRENT OF DISCONTENT OVER THE EP'S LIMITED ROLE IN THE FORMULATION OF A COMMON FOREIGN POLICY. THE

JANUARY DEBATE ON POLITICAL COOPERATION MAY WELL PROVE TO BE QUITE LIVELY AS, BUOYED BY ITS SUCCESS IN THE BATTLE OF THE 1978 BUDGET (REFS), THE EP SEEKS TO EXTEND FURTHER ITS SCOPE OF COMPETENCE, ON WHICH ITS SUCCESSOR, THE DIRECTLY ELECTED PARLIAMENT CAN BUILD. IT IS UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS WILL, IN THE NEAR TERM, AGREE TO INVOLVE THE PARLIAMENT CENTRALLY IN THE FORMULATION OF COMMON EXTERNAL POLICY. ALSO, IT SEEMS PARTICULARLY UNLIKELY THAT MEMBER STATE GOVERNMENTS WOULD AGREE, AT THE PRESENT STAGE, TO ESTABLISH THE PERMANENT POLITICAL COOPERATION OFFICE WHICH THE EP

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